

The Hyperactive Child

RECENT STUDIES INDICATE that the primary symptom in hyperactive children is most frequently a shortened attention span. Hyperkinesis, *per se*, is one of the secondary symptoms. The so-called paradoxical "calming" effect of psychostimulants on such children appears to be the result of increasing the attention span. Secondary symptoms, including hyperkinesis, impulsivity, aggressivity and depression, usually improve when the underlying deficit in the attention span has been corrected.

The long-term prognosis for untreated severe cases is poor because of repeated academic failure and the development of severe personality disorders. Early intervention with parental counseling, special educational techniques and pharmacotherapy are indicated. Methylphenidate (20 to 60 mg per day) and imipramine (50 to 100 mg per day) appear to be the most efficacious medications currently available. Pharmacotherapy must often be continued until early puberty when the children have usually developed alternative means to focus their attention.

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Sex Education in Medicine

SEX EDUCATION IS NOW required in five and is elective in fifty United States medical schools. Relevant topics include anatomy and physiology of normative sexual behavior, sexual variants (for example, homosexuality), sexual problems and symptoms (impotence, frigidity), sex education and counseling, and cultural dimensions.

Most courses have the dual goals of increasing knowledge and resensitizing attitudes in students so that they become more comfortable, objective,

and understanding of sexual behavior in their patients.

At UC Davis School of Medicine, our course titled "Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality" follows the above principles. All sessions are jointly conducted by a male psychiatrist and a female gynecologist. Participating specialties include adult psychiatry, child psychiatry, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, and urology. Teaching sessions use films, videotapes, live patients, panels, and occasional lectures.

Sex education in medicine reflects the profession's growing awareness of patients' needs and of new techniques of treatment. It is appropriate for both students and practitioners, since physicians are called upon more and more to deal with patients as integral human beings whose health is multidimensional.

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Alcoholism: Contemporary Attitudes

IT HAS BEEN ESTIMATED that there are nine million alcoholics and problem drinkers in the United States today, a vast problem of suffering and psychiatric trauma for 36 million family members. Alcoholism has been called the most serious medical health problem of 1970. In keeping with this, Congress passed an act in 1970 which established the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism whose immediate objective is to make treatment and rehabilitation services available and whose long range plans are to develop effective practical means of prevention of alcoholism.

A recently published survey of Veterans Administration psychiatrists and psychologists reveals that they share a decided inconsistency in their attitudes on alcoholism and have only limited interest in treating hospitalized alcoholics. While rejecting the disease concept, these workers prefer to characterize alcoholism as a behavior problem. In the face of such reluctance to treat alcoholics, it has been suggested that the already over-loaded general hospitals be spared